

From: Joven Joven
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 11/16/01 8:17pm
Subject: Microsoft Anti-trust lawsuit settlement.

The current proposal for a settlement to this case is weak, and does nothing to help the IT community. The option to force Microsoft to either disclose the source code of Windows, or make them ship Windows in a stripped down manner without any additional software would have been a much better option.

Microsoft is counting on the pervasiveness of their applications to force users to use them, and eventually have no option but to pay for their services. I use Hotmail because before Microsoft bought it, it was a very good free web based email system. Now that Microsoft has bought it they've been constantly sending me mail pitching their new services. I don't mind this at all, its Microsofts right to promote their services, considering the fact that Hotmail provides no significant revenue outside of advertising. On the other hand, Microsoft should not make it difficult for a user to use one Microsoft service that they've paid for and avoid another. MSN Messenger on Windows XP is a prime example of Microsoft's practices. Every few times XP loads, customers have to constantly cancel the sign up feature if they don't want to use it. This goes way beyond simple marketing. Unlike Hotmail, which is a free service, Windows is something a customer pays for, and by doing so they should have the right to not be bothered about other Microsoft products. Internet Explorer is also another complete pain. By tying IE so deeply into Windows, Microsoft users have no real choice but to use it. By trying to give out such a pathetically weak settlement, you are ensuring that Microsoft continues to bully users and other sectors of the IT industry into being exclusive Microsoft customers simply by the way they ship software, not to mention the history Microsoft carries of bullying computer manufacturers and retailers by threatening to deny them liscensing. Microsoft can very easily maintain its monopoly if you either force them to disclose their source code or sell an 'OS Only' version of windows, as long as they switch tactics from bullying to shipping stable programs.

Another thing that should be seriously considered before the US court system gets plagued by class action lawsuits is to order Microsoft to either discontinue, or completely overhaul their Outlook Express and ISS programs. These two applications have plagued internet users all over the world with viruses coded to exploit the vast security holes in these systems. Placing penalties on Microsoft for putting off repairing security holes would be an excellent idea, as it would reduce the frequency of virus attacks such as Code Red and Nimda, as well as the latest fiasco involving Microsofts 'My Wallet' feature, which had a security hole so obvious it took a programmer only 30 minutes or so to exploit it in able to steal credit card numbers from Microsoft users who utilized the service.

Obviously I am not the only one who thinks this way, as several state officials have shown by turning down the settlement agreement, as well as

the entire European Union's plans to bring Microsoft to task.

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